

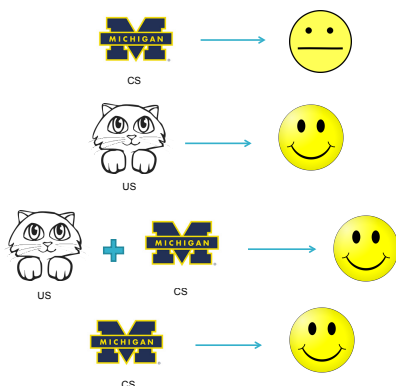
# Manipulating Attitude Change Toward Michigan Fans by Using Facial Expressions in Evaluative Conditioning

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## Background

**Evaluative conditioning (EC)** forms and/or changes attitudes (e.g., Jones, Fazio, and Olson 2009; Sweldens, Van Osselaer, and Janiszewski 2010).

• In EC, a conditioned stimulus (CS) is paired with a positively or negatively valenced unconditioned stimulus (US). Valence of the unconditioned stimulus becomes associated with the conditioned stimulus.



• **Source Confusability (SC)** is how easily a person can misattribute the evaluation of the US to the CS (Jones et al., 2009).

• **Implicit Misattribution** is when one mistakenly attributes attitudes regarding objects as having come from other objects (Jones et al., 2009).

### Current Research Question:

• **Might facial expressions enhance the effects of EC by affecting source confusability?**

## Hypothesis

Participants exposed to smiling Michigan fans as conditioned stimuli will have less negative implicitly-measured attitudes towards Michigan than both participants exposed to frowning Michigan fans as conditioned stimuli or control participants.

## Method

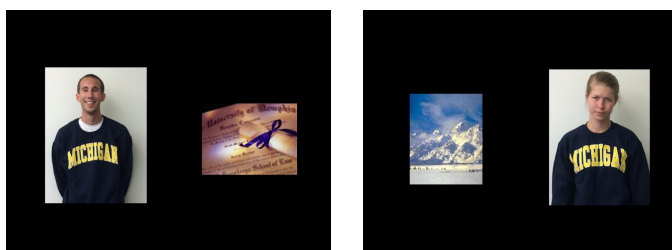
**Participants:** 109 undergraduate students (64 female) from The Ohio State University.

### Task: "Surveillance"

• Cover story: Attention study. Participants were responsible for responding to specific target school fans (Minnesota and Iowa fans) while watching a visual stream of photos and words, including images of other Big Ten team fans.

• Embedded in the stream are paired US's (Michigan fans) and CS's (positive stimuli)

### CS-US Pairing Examples



### Conditions:

- **High Source Confusability (HSC):** Smiling Michigan fans (CS) paired with positive pictures and words (US). Frowning Michigan fans paired with no/neutral stimuli
- **Low Source Confusability (LSC):** Frowning Michigan fans (CS) paired with positive pictures and words (US). Smiling Michigan fans paired with no/neutral stimuli
- **Control:** Equal exposure to smiling/frowning Michigan fans paired with no/neutral stimuli

### Measure:

**DV:** relative speed of matching "Michigan" with "I Like" vs. "I Don't Like" on a **Single Category Personalized IAT** (Olson & Fazio, 2004).

I Like or Michigan      I Don't Like



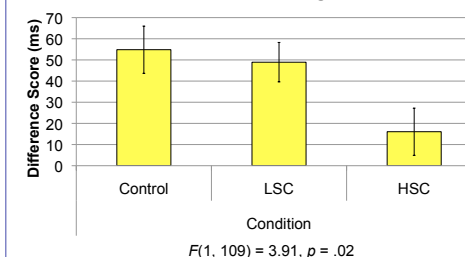
## Results

• Participants exposed to **smiling** Michigan fan images paired with positive US had a smaller difference between their "I Like" + Michigan times and their "I Don't Like" + Michigan times compared to the other two conditions.

• **Incompatible – Compatible = pIAT Score**

• Higher pIAT Score implies more dislike towards Michigan

### Implicitly Measured Negativity Towards Michigan



## Conclusions

• Because the data supports our hypothesis, this means that individuals may have less negative attitudes towards outgroup members when they appear friendlier and are paired with pleasant objects and words.

• Applying this knowledge could potentially lower discrimination and prejudice toward outgroup members.

## References

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Thank you to the Social and Behavioral Sciences Grant for funding this research.